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RECENT TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN TEXAS.

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STATISTICAL DATA OF THE 1950 AND 1960 CENSUSES ENABLES TEXAS MEXICAN-AMERICANS TO BE COMPARED EDUCATIONALLY WITH OTHER GROUPS IN TEXAS, WITH MEXICAN AMERICANS IN OTHER STATES, AND WITH TEXAS MEXICAN AMERICANS OF AN EARLIER DATE. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY, ALL PERSONS OF SPANISH-SURNAME ARE CONSIDERED TO BE MEXICAN AMERICAN. THE PAPER IS ORGANIZED INTO 5 MAJOR SECTIONS--(1) PAST AND PRESENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS, (2) SOME SOURCES OF VARIATION IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS, (3) CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION, (4) CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, AND (5) FUTURE TRENDS IN ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE EDUCATIONAL STATUS. THE FOCUS THROUGHOUT IS ON THE NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF RECENT CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS AND ON THE PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE CHANGE. REFERENCES AND TABLES ARE INCLUDED. THIS IS A REVISED VERSION OF A PAPER PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE TEXAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE (DALLAS, DECEMBER 10, 1965). (SW)

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*RECENT TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN TEXAS**

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It is a fairly well established fact that the Spanish-speaking members of American society have generally had a difficult time adjusting to and succeeding in the educational system. They have encountered obstacles and difficulties from many directions. Living in communities generally dominated by persons of a different culture, they have often been confronted with prejudice and discrimination.[1] School facilities have often been inadequate, and Spanish-speaking students have sometimes been segregated from other students. The schools themselves have been unsympathetic to the special needs of the Spanish-speaking children and have contributed to their poor educational performance by making the whole educational experience a frustrating and humiliating one.[2] Their families have also failed them in the sense of inadequately preparing them for the demands of the Anglo school — they often come to school for the first time speaking only Spanish and encounter a school system that prohibits the use of anything but English.[3] Moreover, strong family ties inhibit the pursuit of goals that involve social and physical mobility,[4] and the nature of their parents' occupations (agricultural migrant workers) frequently presents insurmountable barriers to getting an education. Finally, the individual student for a variety of reasons often lacks the sense of confidence, personal discipline, and achievement orientation that are so important for success in the American society.

This paper will concentrate on one small but important part of this complex problem. We are concerned here with the educational status of the Mexican-American population of Texas.[5] In 1960,

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two out of every five of the almost 3.5 million white persons of Spanish surname in the five Southwestern states resided in Texas. This means that there are some 1.4 million Spanish-surname persons in Texas, and they constitute almost 15 per cent of the total Texas population and over 20 per cent of the school age (5 to 19 years) population.[6] Regardless of how one views this group — in terms of absolute size, proportion of all the Spanish-surname groups, the proportion of the total Texas population, or the proportion of residents the schools are supposed to serve — the Spanish-surname population of Texas and its educational status are clearly matters of great import to Texas, to the Southwest and to the United States.

We will have little to say in this paper about how and why this group achieved the status it has or how it can be changed — not because we feel these are unimportant questions but simply because we feel that a necessary first step is a clear definition of the problem. While it has long been known or at least suspected that the Mexican-Americans in Texas are educationally deprived, it is only with the U. S. Census of 1950 that systematic and reliable data became available. Our goal in this paper is to report and interpret some of the major results of the 1950 and 1960 censuses regarding the education of white persons of Spanish surname in Texas.[7] We will try to give the problem specificity and precision by placing Texas Mexican-Americans in a comparative context — that is, by comparing them to other groups in Texas, to Mexican-Americans in other states, and to Texas Mexican-Americans at an earlier date. Moreover, we will also compare different categories within the Texas Mexican-American population. The focus throughout will be on the nature and magnitude of recent changes in their educational status and on the prospects for future change.

The paper is organized into five major sections:

(1) Past and Present Educational Status

(2) Some Sources of Variation in Educational Status

(3) Changes in Educational Status of Different Elements of the Population

(4) Changes in Educational Status of Different Geographical Areas

(5) Future Trends in Absolute and Relative Educational Status

PAST AND PRESENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS

It is apparent from Table 1 that while the median school years completed by adult Mexican-Americans increased significantly between 1950 and 1960 from 3.6 to 4.8, it remains extremely low.[8] Almost half of the Mexican-Americans in Texas are still essentially functional illiterates — they have under four years of formal education. There was, however, considerable improvement at the extremes. The proportion of Mexican-Americans 25 years of age and over without any schooling declined from 28 per cent in 1950 to 23 per cent in 1960, while the proportion with nine or more years of schooling increased from 12 per cent to 20 per cent.

TABLE 1

MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PERSONS 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, TEXAS ETHNIC GROUPS 1950 AND 1960

Ethnic Group	1950	1960	Change
Anglo	10.0	11.5	1.5
Non-White	7.0	8.1	1.1
Spanish-Surname	3.6	4.8	1.2

Moreover, the changes between 1950 and 1960 did little to change the educational status of Mexican-Americans in Texas compared to non-whites and Anglos. Although, because of their low starting point the Mexican-Americans experienced a greater percentage increase, in absolute terms the increase was only slightly greater than that of non-whites and somewhat less than that of Anglos, thus in one sense, actually increasing the already large differences in the educational status of the groups considered. In 1950, there was a gap of 6.4 years in the median education of Mexican-Americans and Anglos. By 1960, the gap had increased to 6.7 years: this, in spite of the fact that the Mexican-American population is now somewhat *more* urban and *much* younger than the Anglo population.[9]

It is also apparent from Table 2 that the educational status of Mexican-Americans in Texas is far below that of the Spanish-surname population in the other four Southwestern states even after accounting for differences in sex and rural-urban residence. Texas runs a poor last in five of the six categories considered, based on the sex and residence of the person. Only Arizona males in rural-farm areas have a lower educational level than their

counterparts in Texas. There is nearly three years difference in median years of schooling between California and Texas for the total Spanish-surname population, in spite of the fact that nearly 20 per cent of the California group is foreign born whereas only 14 per cent of the Texas group is foreign born. In most cases, the bottom (lowest) category in the other states is higher than the highest category in Texas.

TABLE 2

MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PERSONS — 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER — OF SPANISH SURNAME IN FIVE SOUTHWESTERN STATES, BY SEX AND RURAL-URBAN RESIDENCE
1960

Sex and Residence	Arizona	California	Colorado	New Mexico	Texas
MALES					
Total	7.8	8.9	8.5	8.4	6.2
Urban	8.3	9.2	8.7	8.8	6.7
Rural Non-farm	7.1	8.1	8.1	8.0	5.0
Rural-farm	2.9	4.9	8.1	6.9	4.1
FEMALES					
Total	8.2	9.2	8.7	8.5	6.1
Urban	8.3	9.4	8.9	8.7	6.4
Rural Non-farm	8.0	8.6	8.1	8.2	5.2
Rural-farm	6.0	8.5	8.3	8.0	5.0

Without belaboring the point, it is fairly clear that the educational level of Mexican-Americans in Texas is extremely low relative to both other ethnic groups in Texas and to the Spanish-speaking in other states, and while it did improve somewhat between 1950 and 1960, in absolute terms it did not improve as much as that of Anglos in Texas during the same period.

SOME SOURCES OF VARIATION IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Given this overall picture, we might now examine some of the correlates of educational status with the hope that these might provide some insight into the factors related to this condition, or at the very least enable us to identify the elements of the population that are most educationally deprived.

The Census permits us to contrast and compare the effects of age, sex, residence (urban-rural), nativity and parentage on median school years completed. These facts are presented in Table 3.

There is a strong, very consistent negative relationship between age and completed education for persons 20 years of age and

over.[10] The median years of school completed declines sharply as one moves from the younger to the older age categories, independently of sex, residence, nativity and parentage.

The differences between males and females after allowing for the other four factors are not generally great or consistent in direction and, consequently, of little importance in explaining differences in educational status.

Rural-urban residence, on the other hand, is strongly related to educational status. Urban residents are almost always better educated than rural residents regardless of sex, age, nativity or parentage. The differences between rural non-farm and rural residents are of lesser magnitude and not as consistent, although the rural-farm residents are generally the least educated. This, of course, is probably the consequence of selective migration as well as poorer educational performance and facilities in rural areas.

TABLE 3

MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY WHITE PERSONS OF SPANISH SURNAME, 14 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, BY AGE, SEX, RESIDENCE, NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE TEXAS, 1960

	AGE GROUP					
	14-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over
MALES						
Urban						
Native of native parentage	8.1	9.1	8.1	6.6	4.5	2.7
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	8.2	9.3	7.7	6.2	3.7	1.3
Foreign-born	7.5	6.5	5.5	5.1	2.9	0.9
Rural Non-Farm						
Native of native parentage	7.4	8.0	6.1	4.8	3.2	1.8
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	7.2	7.5	5.3	3.6	1.9	0.8
Foreign-born	6.1	3.6	2.2	2.3	0.9	0.7
Rural-Farm						
Native of native parentage	7.3	6.5	4.3	3.8	3.3	3.4
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	7.3	6.8	3.6	2.6	1.7	0.8
Foreign-born	5.6	4.3	2.9	2.5	1.0	0.7
FEMALES						
Urban						
Native of native parentage	8.2	9.4	7.7	6.1	4.4	2.9
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	8.4	9.5	7.0	5.3	3.1	1.0
Foreign-born	7.2	6.1	5.2	4.8	2.5	0.9
Rural Non-Farm						
Native of native parentage	7.4	7.5	6.2	4.5	3.3	2.6
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	7.3	7.4	4.5	3.0	1.7	0.8
Foreign-born	6.2	4.3	3.0	2.1	0.9	0.7
Rural-Farm						
Native of native parentage	7.2	6.6	5.3	4.4	3.7	1.0
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	7.4	6.8	4.3	2.6	1.3	—
Foreign-born	5.5	3.7	2.8	2.0	0.9	0.7

Nativity and parentage are also strongly associated with completed education. The foreign-born are invariably the poorest educated, and the natives of native parentage are generally the best educated, although in several instances native-born persons of foreign or mixed parentage outrank the natives of native parentage. The native-born groups are generally closer to one another in educational level than either is to the foreign-born group.

The combined effect of these variables is considerable. At one extreme, young (20-24) native-born males and females who live in urban places have completed a median of over nine years schooling; while at the other extreme, over half of the foreign-born persons 65 or over have had less than a year of formal schooling. It is significant to note that in none of the 108 subgroups considered does the median years of schooling completed reach or exceed ten. Native-born urban females 20-24 years of age and of foreign or mixed parentage are the best educated category with a median education of 9.5 years.

It seems clear that while the extremely low level of education of Mexican-Americans in Texas is in part the product of the recency of immigration from Mexico, as well as the poor educational efforts in both the United States and Mexico in the past, and perhaps the poor performance of rural residents, this is far from the whole story. These factors do not explain the relatively poor educational status of young, native-born Mexican-Americans living in cities. Even under these optimum conditions, the educational levels are generally low — less than half have more than a Junior High School education.

CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION

We can further our understanding of recent trends and future prospects by identifying the elements of the population that have been making the greatest advances and those that are not doing so well. Table 4 indicates the median school years completed by white persons of Spanish surname 14 years of age and over in 1950 and 1960, the absolute amount of change during this period, and the percentage change over the 1950 level for 18 population subgroups defined by sex, rural-urban residence, nativity, and parentage.

The largest absolute gains in median education were made by the native-born persons whose parents were also native-born —

these people added from 1.5 to 2.1 years to their median education between 1950 and 1960. The biggest percentage increases were made by foreign-born persons in rural-farm areas — the male median education increased 60 per cent and the female 80 per cent — due, of course, to the extremely low starting point of these groups.

Comparing the changes that occurred among males and females who are matched in terms of the other characteristics, it seems that women have improved their educational status in both relative and absolute terms somewhat more than men. Women made greater gains than men in five out of nine comparisons and were tied in two comparisons, while men were ahead in two others. The percentage increases were even more favorable to females. The differences, however, were generally small.

TABLE 4

MEDIAN SCHOOL YEARS COMPLETED BY WHITE PERSONS OF SPANISH SURNAME 14 YEARS OLD AND OLDER BY SEX, RESIDENCE, NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE TEXAS, 1950 AND 1960

	1950	1960	Absolute Change 1950-1960	Percentage Change 1950-1960
MALES				
Urban				
Native of native parentage	5.9	7.6	1.7	28.8
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	6.0	7.1	1.1	18.3
Foreign-born	3.2	3.8	0.6	18.8
Rural Non-Farm				
Native of native parentage	4.3	6.2	1.9	44.2
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	3.9	5.1	1.2	30.8
Foreign-born	1.6	1.5	—0.1	—6.3
Rural-Farm				
Native of native parentage	4.2	5.7	1.5	35.7
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	3.2	4.1	0.9	28.1
Foreign-born	1.5	2.4	0.9	60.0
FEMALES				
Urban				
Native of native parentage	5.9	7.6	1.7	28.8
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	5.8	6.7	0.9	15.5
Foreign-born	2.9	3.7	0.8	27.6
Rural Non-Farm				
Native of native parentage	4.2	6.3	2.1	50.0
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	3.7	4.9	1.2	32.4
Foreign-born	1.2	1.5	0.3	25.0
Rural-Farm				
Native of native parentage	4.1	6.0	1.9	46.3
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	3.1	4.6	1.5	48.4
Foreign-born	1.0	1.8	0.8	80.0

In terms of residence, the greatest percentage increases were in rural (both farm and non-farm) areas, and the greatest absolute increases in rural non-farm areas.

Nativity appears to be much more important than the other variables — sex, residence or parentage. The native born, regardless of parentage, sex or residence, made substantial absolute gains between 1950 and 1960 — generally more than a year's increase in the median school years completed. Parentage also was of some importance, with the native-born persons of native-born parents invariably making the greatest absolute and frequently the greatest percentage gains. The foreign born, regardless of other factors, made little absolute progress (no category gained as much as a year), and in one category (males in rural non-farm places) the educational level actually declined.

In summary, the improvement in educational status among Mexican-Americans between 1950 and 1960 has been widely but unevenly shared among the 18 categories of the population we have analyzed. Generally the more advantaged elements of the population — the native-born, those of native parents, and the more urban (or at least non-farm groups) — have added to their advantages. In short, the distance between the bottom and the top categories is increasing, not decreasing. In 1950, five years separated the group with the highest educational attainment (6.0) from that with the lowest (1.0), whereas in 1960, 6.1 years separated the top from the bottom (7.6 vs. 1.5). This, of course, reflects the increasing differentiation of the social structure of the Mexican-American community. However, given the age structure of the foreign-born population and their rapidly declining proportion of the total population, the spread between the bottom and the top will probably narrow in time. It remains true, however, that the more acculturated residents (native-born persons of native-born parents) not only have the highest levels of educational attainment, but also are making the greatest gains in educational attainment.

CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

Another way of looking at differential change is to examine it from an ecological perspective. Which counties are changing most and which least rapidly, and how is this related to the location and other characteristics of the county?

There were 64 counties in Texas which had 2,500 or more persons of Spanish surname in 1960 and at least 1,000 in 1950. Although this group of 64 constitutes but a quarter of all Texas counties, it includes over 83 percent of all Spanish-surname persons in the state. In Figure I, we have tried to group these 64 counties for which detailed data is available into four categories based on the median education of the Spanish-surname population in 1960 and on the amount of change in median education of the Spanish-surname population between 1950 and 1960. Within each cell of Figure I are summary statistics that enable us to make some crude comparisons between cells on a number of characteristics of importance, such as the percent of the county population that is Spanish surname, changes in the size of the Spanish-surname population and family income.

We might start with an examination of the differences in educational status. In 35 counties the median school years completed of Mexican-Americans was less than four years in 1960, while in 29 counties it was four years or more.[11] Gonzales County with 1.0 years was the lowest, and Jefferson County with 8.6 years was the highest. Three other counties — LaSalle (1.4), Live Oak (1.8), and DeWitt (2.0) — had medians of two years or less. On the other hand, three counties in addition to Jefferson had medians of seven years or more — Potter (7.8), Tarrant (7.7), and Bell (7.3).

Moreover, it is apparent that the pace of change is not uniform throughout the State. Six counties (DeWitt, Dimmit, Gonzales, LaSalle, Reeves, and Williamson) actually experienced a decline in the median school year completed by resident Mexican-Americans. In two instances — Reeves and Gonzales — it was a drop of a year or more. Among the 58 remaining counties for which comparative data is available, the range of gain was very great. In some there was virtually no change, while in others there were spectacular gains. Eight counties, led by Bell, gained two or more years between 1950 and 1960 (Bell 4.1, Brazoria 2.4, Dallas 2.1, Galveston 2.0, McLennan 2.6, Potter 3.1, Tarrant 2.3, and Taylor 3.4). The extremes — counties that lost ground and those that made big gains — were to a large extent the product of patterns of migration. The number of Mexican-Americans actually declined in four of the six counties that experienced a drop in median education. The counties that experienced large gains in educational status also underwent a rapid growth in their Mexican-American popu-

FIGURE 1

CHANGE IN MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY WHITE PERSONS OF SPANISH SURNAME 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER, 1950-1960

MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY WHITE PERSONS OF SPANISH SURNAME 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER, 1960	Less than 1.2 Years		1.2 Years or More	
4.0 Years or More	Ector Jim Hogg Kleberg Matagorda Starr Tom Green Travis Webb Zapata	A. 9 B. 4 C. 41.6% D. 22.0% E. $2425.00 F. 9.3%	Bell Bexar Brazoria Brazos Brewster Brooks Dallas Duval El Paso Galveston Harris Jefferson Jim Wells McLennan Nueces Potter Presidio Tarrant Taylor Wichita	A. 20 B. 12 C. 7.4% D. 62.7% E. $3505.00 F. 49.3%
Less than 4.0 Years	Atascosa Caldwell Comal Dawson DeWitt Dimmit Gonzales Guadalupe Hays Hidalgo Karnes LaSalle Live Oak Maverick Reeves San Patricio Uvalde Val Verde Wharton Williamson Wilson Zavala	A. 22 B. 1 C. 37.2% D. 14.2% E. $2068.00 F. 11.4%	Bee Calhoun Cameron Fort Bend Hockley Howard Lubbock Medina Midland Pecos Refugio Victoria Willacy	A. 13 B. 3 C. 25.1% D. 32.5% E. $2587.00 F. 13.2%

Legend:

A. Number of counties.
B. Number of counties that are part of a metropolitan area.
C. Median of the percentage of each county's total population that is Mexican-American.
D. Median of the percentage change in each county's Mexican-American population between 1950 and 1960.
E. Median of each county's median Spanish-surname family income, 1959.
F. Percentage of the total Texas Mexican-American population that is in the quadrant.

lation between 1950 and 1960 (Bell 151 percent, Taylor 148 percent, Brazoria 137 percent, Dallas 127 percent, Tarrant 127 percent, Potter 99 percent, McLennon 76 percent, and Galveston 72 percent). It is obvious that this migration has been selective of the better-educated Mexican-Americans. It is unfortunate that we cannot isolate local improvements in educational level from this redistribution of population and other components of change. In any case, the practical effect of the changes described is to segregate spatially the better-educated Mexican-American from his less fortunate brothers, thus increasing the educational difference between them.

Educational status and change among Mexican-Americans do not seem to be associated with proximity to the border or location in the eastern or western part of the State. They are, however, related to a number of other factors. Although there is considerable variation within each quadrant of Figure I, the counties of highest educational attainment in 1960 and greatest improvement in educational level between 1950 and 1960 tend to have the lowest ratio of Mexican-Americans to the total population, the greatest percentage increases in the Mexican-American population between 1950 and 1960, and the highest family incomes for Mexican-Americans. They also tend to be part of a standard metropolitan statistical area as defined by the census.

At the other extreme, the most deprived and unchanging areas tend to have a very high proportion of Mexican-Americans, a relatively stable or declining Mexican-American population, and very low family incomes. They are the most removed from the influence of metropolitan centers.

This suggests that the Mexican-American population is becoming more evenly distributed throughout Texas, and this process involves moves by the better-educated residents of more rural areas to urban areas that have more to offer in terms of economic and educational opportunities. This greater dispersion of the population will undoubtedly improve the Mexican-American minority's political position in the State; but one wonders what the siphoning-off of the better-educated will do to the chances for improvement in the high density (Mexican-American) counties along the border from which they come.

FUTURE TRENDS IN ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE EDUCATIONAL STATUS

So far we have shown that the educational position of Mexican-Americans in Texas has been and continues to be rather poor compared to other ethnic groups in Texas and to Mexican-Americans in the other four Southwestern states. We have also tried to identify the factors associated with the absolute level of educational status and the amount of change experienced between 1950 and 1960.

We will conclude this paper with an attempt to see what the future holds. Barring a radical increase in the number of immigrants from Mexico and a massive migration of the better educated Mexican-Americans to other states, the general educational level of the Mexican-American community in Texas will surely improve as older people reared here and in Mexico during a period when elementary and secondary education were less than universal are gradually replaced by new generations who are for the most part meeting minimum State attendance requirements. The relative youth of the Mexican-American population (44 percent under 15 versus 30 percent of Anglos under 15) and the age of the foreign-born segment (15 percent of the foreign-born Mexican-Americans are over 65 versus 2 percent of the native-born Mexican-Americans) should facilitate this transformation.

Even with these improvements, however, it is doubtful whether in the absence of other kinds of changes the educational level of Mexican-Americans in Texas will approximate that of Anglos in Texas. Even if all Mexican-Americans attain the current level of young (10-24 years), native-born adults in urban places (median 9.1 to 9.5 years), it would be over two years below the 1960 Anglo level and only a year or so above the non-white level. Of course, it is unrealistic to expect the Anglo and non-white levels to remain unchanged during this period. In short, we can expect absolute gains in the Mexican-American educational level; but their relative status is likely to remain unchanged as a consequence of these natural, evolutionary changes in the composition of the population. In fact, in view of the rising educational levels of the general population, improvement will be necessary in order to maintain their present position.

Further light is shed on this problem by examining the relative position of the three ethnic groups in the metropolitan areas — the

areas of greatest growth and future influence. In Table 5 we use the Anglo median school years completed as a standard against which to measure the position and progress of non-whites and Mexican-Americans. Non-whites and Mexican-Americans were below the Anglo level in all of the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas for which data was available. The variation was considerable. For non-whites in 1960, the closest they came to equal status was in El Paso where their median education was 98 percent of the Anglo median. The greatest disparity was in Beaumont-Port Arthur where it was only 62 percent of the Anglo level. Among Mexican-Americans in 1960, the variation was even greater and covered a lower range. The closest they came to equality was in Beaumont-Port Arthur where their median education was almost

TABLE 5

RATIO OF NON-WHITE TO ANGLO AND SPANISH-SURNAME TO ANGLO MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PERSONS 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, TEXAS METROPOLITAN AREAS,* 1950 AND 1960

1960 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area	NON-WHITE			SPANISH-SURNAME		
	Median education as a percentage of Anglo median education		Change in the percentage	Median education as a percentage of Anglo median education		Change in the percentage
	1950	1960		1950	1960	
Texas — Total	70.0	70.4	.4	36.0	41.7	5.7
Abilene	N.A.	73.3	—	N.A.	33.3	—
Amarillo	63.8	78.5	12.7	40.1	66.9	26.8
Austin	62.0	69.9	7.9	28.9	35.8	6.9
Beaumont-Port Arthur	56.0	61.5	5.5	64.2	74.4	10.2
Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito	N.A.	77.2	—	N.A.	31.7	—
Corpus Christi	65.3	65.6	.3	27.1	36.9	9.8
Dallas	62.8	71.1	8.3	36.4	52.9	16.5
El Paso	68.9	97.5	28.6	42.6	55.0	12.4
Fort Worth	68.1	73.1	5.0	46.6	64.7	18.1
Galveston-Texas City	68.9	73.5	4.6	46.2	61.1	14.9
Houston	66.7	72.7	6.0	45.6	52.9	7.3
Laredo	N.A.	N.A.	—	36.4	43.9	7.5
Lubbock	59.3	68.6	9.3	14.4	25.6	11.2
Midland	N.A.	70.4	—	N.A.	29.6	—
Odessa	N.A.	74.6	—	N.A.	39.0	—
San Angelo	67.9	69.6	1.7	25.9	34.8	8.9
San Antonio	71.2	78.3	7.1	38.1	47.5	9.4
Waco	66.1	74.5	8.4	26.6	50.0	23.4
Wichita Falls	67.9	N.A.	—	41.3	N.A.	—

*Texarkana and Tyler omitted because of lack of data.
N.A. — Data not available.
Source: Derived from Browning and McLemore, Table 14, p. 32.

three-fourths of the Anglo level, while the greatest difference was in Lubbock where it was only a little more than one-fourth of the Anglo level.

In every metropolitan area for which data were available both non-white and Mexican-Americans succeeded in improving their position relative to Anglos between 1950 and 1960. The improvement in the relative position of the non-whites (non-white gains were greater in only two SMSA's — Austin and El Paso). However, in only one of the metropolitan areas (Beaumont-Port Arthur) was the Mexican-American position in 1960 superior to that of non-whites. Moreover, the differences between Mexican-Americans and non-whites are generally of such a magnitude that they are unlikely to be affected much by current differentials in the rate of change. In short, we find Mexican-Americans making some relative gains on both non-whites and Anglos in almost all metropolitan areas and also statewide, but with one exception (Beaumont-Port Arthur) they are still at the bottom of the totem pole and because of the size of the non-white advantage likely to remain there for some time.

It is interesting to note that the rank order of metropolitan areas in terms of median education of Mexican-Americans corresponds almost perfectly to the rank order based on ratio of Mexican-American to Anglo median education. This results from the fact that there is little variation in the median education of Anglos in these metropolitan areas. Only 1.3 years separates the SMSA of highest Anglo education (Austin and Laredo both have median educations of 12.3 years) from the SMSA of lowest Anglo education (Waco, 11.0 years); whereas, 5.6 years separates the best educated Mexican-American group (Beaumont-Port Arthur, 8.7 years) from the poorest educated one (Lubbock, 3.1 years). This means in effect that the Anglo educational level varies little and is largely independent of the Mexican-American level, and it also suggests that the low Mexican-American educational levels are not simply the result of the low socio-economic status of the areas they inhabit, athough this certainly is a factor.

The feeling that the gap between Mexican-Americans and Anglos will persist for a long time receives further support from the data available on differential enrollment (Table 6). In the

TABLE 6

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, BY TEXAS ETHNIC GROUPS, PERSONS 5 TO 34 YEARS OF AGE, 1960

	Age Groups			
Ethnic Group	5-15	16-19	20-34	Total
TOTAL NUMBER, ANGLO	1,450,423	415,267	1,386,675	3,252,365
Total Number enrolled	1,243,789	267,003	112,679	1,623,471
Percentage of total enrolled	85.8	64.3	8.1	49.9
TOTAL NUMBER, NON-WHITE	292,878	73,866	231,021	597,765
Total number enrolled	242,622	42,568	12,069	297,259
Percentage of total enrolled	82.8	57.6	5.2	49.7
TOTAL NUMBER, SPANISH-SURNAME	424,308	99,902	284,028	808,238
Total number enrolled	340,218	46,155	14,052	400,425
Percentage of total enrolled	80.2	46.2	4.9	49.5
Additional Spanish-Surname persons who would be enrolled in school if Spanish-Surname percentages enrolled were equal to Anglo percentages enrolled	23,838	18,082	8,954	50,874

aggregate there do not appear to be any significant differences between Anglos, non-whites and Mexican-Americans in terms of the proportion of persons 5 to 34 years of age who are enrolled in school. Roughly 50 percent of each group is enrolled in school. Differences in the age composition of the three groups, however, obscure some important differences in their enrollment rates.

At the lowest levels (ages 5-15), equality is within reach; 80 percent of the Mexican-Americans, 83 percent of non-whites, and 86 percent of the Anglos are enrolled in school. However ,when we look at the older age groups, we see that the Mexican-Americans are much more likely than non-whites or Anglos to drop out of school and much less likely to go on to higher education. While 23 percent of all persons 16 to 19 years of age in Texas are Mexican-

Americans, only 13 percent of all persons 16 to 19 years of age enrolled in school are Mexican-Americans. If Mexican-American enrollment rates for the age groups in Table 6 were equal to Anglo rates, there would have been 51,000 more Mexican-American young people enrolled in school in 1960 than there actually were. Unless the schools can retain more of these young people and motivate more of them to pursue a higher education, the educational status of Mexican-Americans in Texas will remain low and subordinate to that of Anglos and non-whites; and most importantly, it will be inadequate for the needs of the residents of an urban-industrial society. In short, it is not just a question of relative status but one of the sheer adequacy of one's preparation for life.

It is interesting to note that when the school enrollment of Mexican-Americans in Texas is compared to that of Mexican-Americans in the other four Southwestern states, Texas does not come out well even after allowing for differences in the nativity and parentage of the population (Table 7). Out of 36 comparisons possible in Table 7, Texas is inferior on 33 — in some cases the differences are very great. It is apparent from the table that Texas youngsters start school later than those in the other states. Only about one-third of the five- and six-year-old Mexican-Americans in Texas are enrolled in school, whereas over twice that proportion of Mexican-American five- and six-year-olds are enrolled in the other four states. If one looks now at 16- and 17-year-olds (drop-out ages) — among the native-born persons with native-born parents, 58 per cent in Texas are enrolled compared to 73 per cent in the other states; among the native-born of foreign or mixed parentage, 60 per cent in Texas, 77 per cent in the other states; among the foreign-born 56 per cent in Texas, 67 per cent in the other states. There are, in other words, differences of from 11 to 17 points in the percentage of this age group enrolled in school.[12] This evidence of the greater success of the schools in other states in retaining their Mexican-American youths, as well as the data regarding the superior educational status of Mexican-Americans in these states, suggests that the poor performance in Texas cannot be attributed entirely to cultural and language handicaps of the Mexican-American children there.

What then accounts for the high drop-out rate in Texas? While we are not prepared to answer this question fully, an examination of differential enrollment of 16- and 17-year-olds does provide

TABLE 7

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT OF WHITE PERSONS OF SPANISH SURNAME, 5 TO 34 YEARS OLD, BY AGE, NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE, FOR TEXAS, AND ARIZONA, COLORADO, CALIFORNIA AND NEW MEXICO COMBINED, 1960

	Percentage Enrolled in School	
	Four State Total	Texas
Native of Native Parentage		
Total 5 to 34 years old	71.3	56.5
5 to 6 year	71.4	35.0
7 to 13	97.4	94.6
14 to 15	92.7	82.6
16 to 17	72.8	57.8
18 to 19	34.6	29.8
20 to 21	12.4	10.8
22 to 24	7.7	4.7
25 to 34	4.8	3.4
Native of Foreign or Mixed Parentage		
Total 5 to 34 years old	43.3	41.5
5 to 6 year	73.5	32.6
7 to 13	97.2	94.0
14 to 15	92.6	82.5
16 to 17	76.9	60.4
18 to 19	35.7	33.3
20 to 21	12.1	12.9
22 to 24	7.4	6.4
25 to 34	4.2	3.3
Foreign-Born		
Total 5 to 34 years old	30.7	33.1
5 to 6 year	73.1	37.8
7 to 13	95.6	94.6
14 to 15	89.3	85.2
16 to 17	67.1	56.2
18 to 19	32.6	29.8
20 to 21	12.0	13.0
22 to 24	7.0	5.0
25 to 34	3.3	2.9

some understanding of the problem. Table 8 indicates that both sex and residence are important factors. In both cities and rural non-farm areas, females are more likely than males to have dropped out of school before reaching 18 years of age. In rural-farm areas there is little difference between male and female enrollment. The

TABLE 8
PER CENT OF WHITE PERSONS OF SPANISH SURNAME AGED 16-17 ENROLLED IN SCHOOL BY SEX AND URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE, TEXAS, 1960

Residence	Males	Females	Total
Urban	62.0	57.8	59.9
Rural Non-Farm	58.6	50.4	54.6
Rural-Farm	52.0	52.8	52.4

biggest differences are based on residence especially among males. Urban residents are much more likely to stay in school than rural non-farm or rural-farm residents. Surprisingly, nativity and parentage are of little significance in explaining enrollment differences among 16- and 17-year-olds. While sex and residence account for a good deal of the enrollment variation within the Mexican-American group, it is obvious that even if these differences were eliminated, the Mexican-American enrollment level would be quite low (urban-males only 62 per cent). Why the Mexican-American enrollment rate is so much lower than the Anglo rate, we will leave for future research to determine.

One final question — granted that the enrollment picture is poor, is it, however, improving? Unfortunately, we do not have enrollment data for 1950 to see whether there has been any change. Table 9, however, does shed some light on this problem. By comparing the median education of two successive cohorts of persons just completing their education (14-24 years), we get some idea of how much change in school enrollment levels has occurred. The data show that the educational level of Mexican-American teenagers and young adults rose sharply between 1950 and 1960 in all 18 categories considered. This suggests that the schools have made some progress in bringing Mexican-American school attendance in line with the requirements of the law and the levels of other groups, but that they have a long way to go — over half of even the most advantaged elements of this population have less than ten years of schooling.

We can conclude by saying that while the Mexican-American population is moving gradually in the direction of equal educational status, the changes as of now are too small to suggest a radical change in their relative position in Texas for some time to come.

TABLE 9

MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY WHITE PERSONS OF SPANISH SURNAME 14-24 YEARS OF AGE BY SEX, RESIDENCE, NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE, TEXAS, 1950 AND 1960

	1950	1960	
	14-24 Years of Age	14-19 Years of Age	20-24 Years of Age
MALES			
Urban			
Native of native parentage	6.8	8.1	9.1
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	7.0	8.2	9.3
Foreign-born	4.2	7.5	6.5
Rural Non-Farm			
Native of native parentage	5.6	7.4	8.0
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	5.4	7.2	7.5
Foreign-born	2.2	6.1	3.6
Rural-Farm			
Native of native parentage	5.4	7.3	6.5
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	4.0	7.3	6.8
Foreign-born	2.2	5.6	4.3
FEMALES			
Urban			
Native of native parentage	7.0	8.2	9.4
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	7.2	8.5	9.5
Foreign-born	5.3	7.2	6.1
Rural Non-Farm			
Native of native parentage	5.6	7.4	7.5
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	5.3	7.3	7.4
Foreign-born	2.7	6.2	4.3
Rural-Farm			
Native of native parentage	5.3	7.2	6.6
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	3.1	7.4	6.8
Foreign-born	2.1	5.5	3.7

We can expect a continuation of the trends we have noted between 1950 and 1960. The redistribution of the population will most likely continue and continue to result in sharp increases in the educational status of Mexican-Americans in particular places, but only at the expense of other more deprived places in Texas. Mean-

ingful and significant gains in the aggregate will be dependent upon the ability to reduce the high drop-out rate. Because the population is so young and its currently high fertility will probably decline in the future, what happens now will have a great impact on the future. In short, the opportunity to improve the educational level of the Mexican-American population is great at this time, and the burden of failure to do so will be felt for many years to come

Before effective remedial action can be taken, some serious questions will have to be answered:

(1) Why are Mexican-Americans in Texas so much more deprived than persons in other states who have a similar cultural and language tradition?
(2) Why are the Texas schools less effective than those in the other Southwestern states in getting Mexican-American children to start school on time and to stay in school beyond the legally required time?
(3) Why have Mexican-Americans in Texas attained less education than Negroes, although most observers think the Negro encounters greater prejudice and discrimination than the Mexican-American?
(4) Why is the educational status of Mexican-Americans who have been in this country several generations so low? Why aren't native-born persons with native-born parents any better off (in terms of education, jobs, and income) than persons of mixed or foreign parentage?
(5) Why hasn't there been a greater improvement in the educational status of Mexican-Americans as they urbanized and shifted to non-agricultural occupations? (In 1960, 79 per cent lived in urban places and only 16 per cent were employed as farm laborers).
(6) Why does the Mexican-American level of education seem to vary independently of the Anglo level, i.e. Anglo educational levels are relatively high even in the metropolitan areas where the Mexican-American levels are lowest?

We hope this brief examination of the educational status of Mexican-Americans in Texas will stimulate the interest of researchers in doing further work on the problems of this large and most neglected of American minority groups.

1. "Spanish-Speaking Peoples," Staff Paper prepared by Julian Samora for the United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1964. Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1948.

2. Julian Samora, "The Educational Status of a Minority," *Theory Into Practice.* George I. Sanchez, "Spanish in the Southwest," in *La Raza,* Julian Samora, editor, University of Notre Dame Press, 1966.

3. Sanchez, *ibid.,* p. 45, quotes the Texas Education Agency as reporting that in 1957 solely because of the language barrier, approximately in the first grade before advancing to he second — many spending as much as three or more years in the first grade.

4. William Madsen, *The Mexican-Americans of South Texas.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 108.

5. There is no commonly agreed upon term to describe Americans of Spanish and Mexican descent. Among the many expressions used are Spanish-American, Spanish-speaking, Mexican-American, Mexicanos, Latin American, and Spanish surname. None of these terms is entirely satisfactory or acceptable to everyone—each includes ambiguities and defines t slightly different population, but in the case of Texas, the differences are not significant. We will, therefore, use them more or less interchangably relying primarily on "Mexican-American" when speaking of the group in general. Since the U. S. Census uses the category "While persons of Spanish surname," we will also use this expression on occasion and assume that the census definition corresponds to our more general definition, although the census definition probably under-estimates the size of the group (while it includes non-Mexican persons with Spanish surnames, it does not include Mexican-Americans with Anglo names, and there are probably more of the latter than the former in Texas).

6. These facts and those that follow are derived from two publications of the U. S. Bureau of the Census: *U. S. Census of Population: 1960;* Subject Reports, Persons of Spanish Surname. (Final Report PC 2-1Z); and *U. S. Census of Population, 1950,* Vol. IV, Special Reports, Part 3, Chapter C, Persons of Spanish Surname. Harley L. Browning and S. Dale McLemore, "A Statistical Profile of the Spanish-Surname Population of Texas," Austin: Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas, 1964, is an excellent summary of the information contained in these two census publications about the Texas Spanish surname population.

7. The 1950 report is based on a 20 percent sample of the population, and the 1960 report on a 25 percent sample. The figures in these reports are consequently subject to sampling variability. Caution must therefore be exercised in interpreting the differences betweeen sub-samples of different size especially when the sub-samples are fairly small.

8. The major indicator of educational status used in this paper is "median years of school completed," as defined by the U. S. Census. Several characteristics of this measure should be noted. First, it is a relatively crude indicator. The median is the point in the distribution that splits a group into two equal parts. If the median years of school completed is four years, it means that half of the group has more education than that and half has less. Changes can occur at the extremes without any change in the median. For example, all those without any schooling could get three years of schooling without changing the median of the group — half of the group still has under four years of schooling. Second, the median years of school completed really refers to the highest grade completed and not how many years one attended school; therefore, the census measure does not reflect grade retardation or tell us how long it took

to complete a given level of education. Finally, the measure does not reflect differences in the quality of the education received. Rarely can it be assumed that a year of schooling for a minority group child is equivalent to a year of schooling for a dominant group child. In spite of its shortcomings we are utilizing the median as our major indicator of educational status because of the necessity to use a summarizing measure of some kind to make the analysis comprehensible. The median is also conveniently at hand, having been computed in most cases by the Census Bureau.

If we considered persons 14 years of age and older as we do in some tables instead of just persons 25 years of age and older, the absolute level of education and the gain between 1950 and 1960 would be somewhat greater because much of the improvement is in the education of the young people just leaving school.

9. The median age of Anglos 25 years of age and over is about four years greater than the median age of Mexican-Americans 25 and over.

10. Many of those under 20 years of age have not completed their education.

11. Almost 25 percent of the Mexican-American population of the State resides in the 35-low education counties, while almost 59 percent resides in the 29 high-education counties.

12. It may very well be that there is a relationship between starting school late and dropping out early — such that the later one starts school, the earlier one is likely to drop out.